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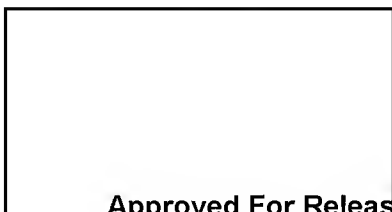
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USSR - NORTH VIETNAM: Podgorny will visit Hanoi
next week.

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USSR - NORTH VIETNAM: SOVIET PRESIDENT PODGORNYY
WILL LEAD A DELEGATION TO HANOI NEXT WEEK. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAS A BUSY SCHEDULE THIS MONTH, AND THERE MAY BE SOME SLIPPAGE IN THE TIMETABLE. NONETHELESS, A HIGH-LEVEL SOVIET VISIT TO NORTH VIETNAM IS ALMOST CERTAINLY IN THE CARDS.

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THE SOVIET DECISION TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT NIXON AFTER THE MINING OF NORTH VIETNAM'S PORTS DID NOT GO DOWN WELL IN HANOI, AND MOSCOW UNDOUBTEDLY SEES A NEED TO REASSURE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE. HANOI WILL WANT TO DISCUSS WAYS OF GETTING SUPPLIES THROUGH, AS WELL AS THE USSR'S LUKEWARM ENDORSEMENT OF ITS CURRENT OFFENSIVE. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PROBABLY RESENT MOSCOW'S VEILED SKEPTICISM ABOUT HANOI'S PROSPECTS IN THE CURRENT OFFENSIVE AND ITS REPEATED REPUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE THE BEST WAY TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS.

UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE VISIT IS LIKELY TO BE DIFFICULT. THE SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY ATTEMPT TO REASSURE THE VIETNAMESE, BUT IN WAYS THAT WILL NOT UNDULY DISTURB THE US OR THE ATMOSPHERE GENERATED BY RECENT US-SOVIET TALKS. THE SOVIETS ARE LIKELY TO CITE THEIR EFFORTS TO SECURE CHINESE COOPERATION REGARDING SEA SHIPMENTS TO HANOI AS EVIDENCE THAT THE USSR HAS NOT ABANDONED THE VIETNAMESE, AND THEY WILL PROBABLY BE AMENABLE TO ANY NORTH VIETNAMESE SUGGESTIONS ON NEW APPROACHES TO THE CHINESE TO SECURE THEIR COOPERATION IN GETTING SOVIET SUPPLIES TO NORTH VIETNAM. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS ARE LIKELY TO REITERATE THEIR VIEW THAT NEGOTIATIONS OFFER THE VIETNAMESE AS MANY ADVANTAGES AS FIGHTING, AND THEY PROBABLY WILL URGE THE VIETNAMESE TO EXPLORE THE LATEST US PEACE PROPOSALS.

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